

EXHIBIT O

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK**

In re Terrorist Attacks on September 11, 2001	03-md-1570 (GBD)(SN) ECF Case
This document relates to: <i>Thomas Burnett, Sr., et al. v. The Islamic Republic of Iran, et al.</i>	15-cv-9903 (GBD) (SN) ECF Case

DECLARATION OF ELAINE DUCH

I, Elaine Duch, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, do hereby declare under penalty of perjury as follows:

1. I am more than 18 years of age and competent to testify in court to the matters stated below. The statements made in this Declaration are based on my personal knowledge unless otherwise indicated.

2. I was a citizen of the United States on September 11, 2001, and I remain so today. Attached as Exhibit A to this Declaration is a true and correct copy of my proof of citizenship.

3. On September 11, 2001, I was present in New York City when the terrorist attacks of the World Trade Center Towers occurred. At the time of these horrific attacks, I worked as a Senior Administrative Assistant for the Real Estate Department at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. Our offices were located on the 88th Floor in the North Tower of the World Trade Center.

4. I had arrived at work as usual on the morning of 9/11. Suddenly, a passenger jet, hijacked and piloted by terrorists, plunged into the North Tower and tore through the entire width of the building, causing destruction, mayhem and unspeakable carnage that would endure in the horrific memories of survivors, like me, for a lifetime.

5. At the time of the collision of the passenger jet into the North Tower, I was standing in the hallway picking up a lease only a few floors below the impact zone. At that moment, the elevator doors flew open and a fireball of fuel and chemicals blew through the elevator shaft. I became engulfed in flames, and I received horrific burns as a result. Due to the severity of my exposure to the flames and jet fuel, all of the clothes I was wearing at the time were nearly burned away. Two of my colleagues helped to put out the flames on my body with their hands. They then helped me to temporary safety in a large office where about twenty of my other co-workers had assembled. Someone then gave me a sweater to cover up my burned body. I was horrified at the sight of the skin dripping down my legs. As the building burned above us, some co-workers began to stuff paper towels under and along the sides of the door. However, the group then decided that we all needed to get out of the building as quickly as possible so that I could get medical attention. Even with my severe burns, I proceeded to climb over the waist-high building debris and parts of walls and ceilings with flames visible to try and escape the area. The scene was like a war zone.

6. I made it to a stairwell and walked down eighty-eight floors with some of my co-workers. Due to my horrific burns, my friends, Jerry Gaeta and Dorene Smith, helped me to walk down the eighty-eight floors in the North Tower until we were able to escape from the building. When I exited the North Tower at the ground floor of the building, first responders put me on a stretcher and a priest administered my last rites as they didn't think that I would survive. They then urgently transported me to St. Vincent's Hospital and then to New York Presbyterian Hospital.

7. As a result of these brutal terrorist attacks, I suffered horrific injuries on September 11, 2001. I suffered third degree burns over seventy-seven percent of my entire body. I endured seven separate surgical procedures to address my burns. My burns and exposures caused thinning of the cornea in my eye, which resulted in my experiencing vision loss and blurred vision.

Due to the large amounts of jet fuel and debris that I inhaled, I suffered from and continue to suffer from adult respiratory distress syndrome, respiratory failure, nosocomial pneumonia with MRSA, and chronic bronchitis. Further, my burns caused the heterotopic ossification of one of my elbows and several fingers on my hands. I underwent major surgeries on September 19, 2002, and October 28, 2002, to address these injuries and to allow for the placement of titanium pins in some of my badly damaged fingers. I also suffered bilateral hearing loss as a side effect of some of the antibiotic medications, including vancomycin, that I received to treat my infections associated with my burns.

8. I have not been able to work since 9/11 due to my severe injuries and I have been designated as totally disabled.

9. I suffered, and continue to suffer, severe emotional distress as a result of the above terrorist attacks. I still see a therapist every week to deal with the emotional and physical trauma that I have endured. It is very difficult to recount the events of that horrible day that stole everything from me.

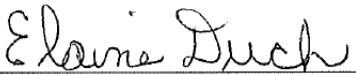
10. Due to the severity of my injuries and my burns that I suffered on 9/11, I initially remained in the Weill Cornell Medical Center Burn Unit for over four months after my arrival. I was in a drug-induced coma until December 29, 2001, and I remained in the Burn Unit until January 29, 2002. At the time of my release from the Burn Unit on January 29, 2002, I was interviewed regarding my experiences and my survival on 9/11. My interview is available on the internet at the following web address: <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/a96371db76f2a86ca330bca3165003f2>. My interview is also viewable on YouTube at the following web address: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpadxgHuMEg>.

11. Following my release from the Burn Unit, medical personnel transported me to Burke Rehabilitation Center in White Plains, New York. I remained at Burke Rehabilitation until my discharge on June 5, 2002, which was nine months from the date of the 9/11 attacks.

12. I previously pursued a claim through the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund (VCF Number 212-002146) specifically related to my physical injuries incurred on September 11, 2001, and my claim was determined to be eligible for compensation.

I declare UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY that the foregoing is true and correct.

EXECUTED on this 11th day of February 2021



Declarant, Elaine Duch

**EXHIBITS
FILED
UNDER SEAL
(ECF No.
5716)**